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TIME OF HIS LIFE

As the new doc in Doctor Who, Matt Smith is in for an out of this world adventure **P3**



Time for a change

As a world of *Doctor Who* fans waits with bated breath, Matt Smith – the exuberant fellow who'll be slipping into David Tennant's Chuck Taylors as the 11th Doctor – chats about his dream role.

Anooska Tucker-Evans

IT is 8am in England when my phone interview is patched through to Matt Smith.

He's sitting in his dressing room eating a banana muffin, and even though he is talking to me with his mouth full – usually a rude practice – there's something quite charming about the 11th Doctor.

He speaks in a slightly posh English accent and makes small talk effortlessly, but when asked about the show, he switches into work mode, answering questions with great poise and wisdom well beyond his 27 years.

He speaks of the Doctor with tremendous pride, describing him as “the greatest character in British TV history”, and says playing him is “extraordinary”.

“Hopefully I've brought out all the colours in him that I see which are the sort of barmy, crazy time traveller with two mad hearts, balls of steel, and the quickest brain in the world,” he says.

Smith was announced as the replacement for the outgoing David Tennant in January last year, and at that point was a relative unknown.

His biggest television role was in the short-lived UK series *Party Animals*, while other gigs were only bit-parts in shows such as *Secret Diary Of A Call Girl* and *Moses Jones*.

While stepping from relative obscurity into the role of one of the world's most recognisable characters would be daunting for some, Smith took it all in his stride.

“As time passes you become more confident and these things are only as intimidating as you allow them to be,” he says wisely.

“You do have to adjust in a certain way because more people recognise you when you walk down the street, but it's a product of doing something wonderful for a living.”

Before being cast in the role, the young actor had seen very little of *Doctor Who*. He later watched

episodes with Tennant and Christopher Eccleston, but says he was careful to put his own spin on the character.

“I think with anything it has to be instinctively your own and I just tried to be as clear with that as I could and as brave as I could and as honest, and try to invest my own heart as it were,” he says.

With Smith the youngest ever Doctor, this series promises lots of action and adventure as he and his new sidekick, Amelia Pond (Karen Gillan), fight to save the world from intergalactic critters.

“I love all that really physical stuff. That's the part of the job that I really thrive on,” he says.

Though Tennant's sneakers are certainly big ones to fill, *TV Guide* thinks Smith will have no trouble.

With his vibrant spirit, youthful enthusiasm and unwavering charisma, he brings a new energy to the role which is set to reinvigorate the series.

Q&A

Matt Preston

MasterChef, 7.30pm Sun-Fri, Ten

Dream superpower?

Flying. There'd be no waiting for cars, cabs, or planes.

Most annoying habit?

Talking too much and being too loud. There's a sign on the door of the wardrobe van that says, “No loud people before 10am, and that includes you Matt Preston”.

When you're alone you...

Watch sport on the tele in my underpants, drinking beer.

Your perfect day?

Wake up, get bombarded by my children, make pancakes with them, then go to the beach and have fish and chips. Later go somewhere beautiful for dinner with my wife. Then hit some bars.

What skill do you wish you had?

I would love to play the piano like Jerry Lee Lewis.

Doctor Who
Sunday, 7.30pm, ABC1

On the cover
Matt Smith and Karen Gillan



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